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United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Southwestern Region

RG-R3-16-5



# Wilderness . . .

Things You Need To Know

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## **What is Wilderness Anyway?**

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A legislated wilderness is “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (1964 Wilderness Act). Some of the key elements in a wilderness setting are solitude and freedom. These essential qualities are most sensitive to visitor behavior and the degree of restrictions placed on the use of a wilderness. To avoid overregulation, wilderness management must rely on the wilderness user to assume the responsibility to practice appropriate back-country techniques. For example, large groups are particularly disruptive to the quality of solitude. Even day use by large groups (25 and over) can sharply reduce other users sense of solitude. Learn a NO TRACE camping ethic which leaves the wilderness setting the same as you discovered it when you arrived. Think of others who are seeking their own quality of solitude, and minimize your presence in wilderness.

### **Are There Activity Exceptions Addressed in the 1964 Wilderness Act?**

Yes, Congress did recognize that wilderness may not be an area that is absolutely pristine and undisturbed, an area that has never felt the imprint of humans. When Congress passed the Wilderness Act of 1964, they recognized that such areas may not exist. The act defines (in part) a wilderness as an area of undeveloped Federal land that “generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable.” Provisions were made as exceptions to the rule, for such activities as grazing livestock, mining minerals, and building trails. Wilderness is not an unachievable concept, but rather a real-world possibility as provided for by law. Wilderness is further defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

### **Should Pets be Brought Into a Wilderness?**

Pets are generally allowed in wilderness areas. However, you should recognize that they may be bothersome and dangerous to wildlife in the area and sometimes to other visitors. As such, pets must be kept under your control at all times. In most instances relating to national parks, prohibitions will likely

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exist on the entry of pets. Inquire at the respective local wilderness administrative offices for specific regulations.

### **Aren't Wilderness Areas Only for the Super-Physically Fit and/or Elite Rich Who Can Afford the Special Equipment to Visit These Areas?**

Wilderness areas come in many shapes and sizes, and there are many opportunities for anyone in reasonable physical condition to visit a wilderness. A simple day trip requires only a map of the area, canteen, appropriate clothes, and an adventuresome spirit.

As you develop your own abilities, you may want to make a corresponding investment in more specialized backpacking equipment. Commercial outfitting and guiding is permitted and allows many, including people with disabilities, to visit a wilderness in relative comfort.

An individual who has a disability which requires the use of a wheelchair may use one in a wilderness. However, consistent with the Wilderness Act, no agency is required to provide any form of special treatment or accommodation, or to construct any facilities or modify any conditions of land within a wilderness area to facilitate such use.

*"The term wheelchair means a device solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area."*

### **What Happens if I'm Lost or an Emergency Arises in a Wilderness?**

Wilderness requires the ultimate in the assumption of responsibility for one's own safety and well-being as well as for the well-being of the land itself. For the long-term perpetuation of wilderness, visitors must assume these responsibilities. However, the law recognizes the impossibility of divorcing wilderness from modern reality and, when requested, helicopters may be approved for search and rescue operations within a wilderness. In Arizona, the county sheriff's office is responsible for these search and rescue operations. In New Mexico, the Department of Public

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Safety coordinates these operations. The National Park Service coordinates rescues in national park wilderness areas and should be contacted. You may be liable for the cost of rescue operations.

### **Could Wildlife Species be Reintroduced into a Wilderness Where Not Presently Found?**

Yes. Wildlife is a vital part of wilderness. If certain species were native to an area, the Federal agency administering the area would cooperate with and encourage the state game and fish department to reintroduce the species.

### **Are Hunting and Fishing Allowed in a Wilderness?**

In Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management wilderness areas, hunting and fishing are governed by appropriate state laws. In National Park Service wilderness areas, there are special restrictions on these activities. Please inquire at local offices for more information.

### **Is Mining Allowed in a Wilderness?**

Yes. Effective January 1, 1984, no new claims could be filed in a wilderness. However, mining activity on existing claims validated by agency mineral examiners will be permitted under an approved operating plan. Special regulations apply to mining activities within National Park Service wilderness areas. Inquire locally for more information.

### **Is Grazing and Maintenance of Range Facilities Allowed in a Wilderness?**

Yes, grazing is allowed in all Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management areas where it was authorized when the area was initially made wilderness, and at about the same levels. Ranching activities continue in most wilderness areas in the Southwest. National Park Service wilderness areas have legal mandates which prohibit grazing activities.

Congress made special provisions for both maintaining range facilities and for installing new improvements for resource protection, when called for by an approved

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management plan. Motorized equipment and vehicles may occasionally be used to conduct this work when no practical alternative exists and prior approval has been granted by the agency.

### **If an Area is Made Wilderness, Will I Need a Permit to Visit the Area?**

Because of the management information needs of some areas, permits or registration are sometimes required to visit a wilderness. Permits are usually free, not rationed, and often self-issuing, although policies may change. It is best to contact a local office for current information.

Permits may be required for both day and overnight use in National Park Service wilderness areas. Please inquire at local offices for details.

There is no fee required to hike most Bureau of Land Management wilderness areas in Arizona or New Mexico. However, Aravaipa Canyon and Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness areas do require permits and/or fees. Reservations and payment in advance may be required. Contact the Safford Field Office at (928) 348-4400 for Aravaipa Canyon and the Arizona Strip Field Office at (435) 688-3200 for Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs for specific requirements and current trail information.

### **Can I Volunteer My Service to Help Manage the Wilderness Resource?**

Yes. All Federal agencies charged with the responsibility of managing public wilderness lands need volunteer assistance to supplement their programs. Volunteers are needed for wilderness patrols, trailhead contacts, community education sessions, fire history studies, water quality sampling, wildlife monitoring, trail maintenance, and much more. Some specialized programs are available, such as the Wilderness Information Specialist (WIS) and Adopt-A-Trail programs developed by the Forest Service. Make an active commitment of your desires to perpetuate an enduring wilderness resource. Inquire at local offices for details. Volunteer!



# The National Wilderness Preservation System

## Arizona

### USDA Forest Service

Forest(s)	Wilderness	Acres
Apache	Bear Wallow	11,080
	Escudilla	5,200
	Mt. Baldy	7,079
Coconino	Fossil Springs	10,434
	Kachina Peaks	18,616
	Munds Mountain	24,411
	Red Rock-Secret Mountain	47,194
	Strawberry Crater	10,743
	West Clear Creek	15,238
	Wet Beaver	6,155
Coconino, Kaibab and Prescott	Sycamore Canyon	55,942
Coronado	Chiricahua	87,700
	Galiuro	76,317
	Miller Peak	20,228
	Mt. Wrightson	25,260
	Pajarita	7,553
	Pusch Ridge	56,933
	Rincon Mountain	38,590
	Santa Teresa	26,780
Kaibab	Kanab Creek	63,760
	Saddle Mountain	40,539
Kaibab and Coconino	Kendrick Mountain	6,510
Prescott	Apache Creek	5,666
	Castle Creek	25,215
	Cedar Bench	14,950
	Granite Mountain	9,762
	Juniper Mesa	7,406
	Woodchute	5,833
Prescott and Tonto	Pine Mountain	20,061
Coconino and Tonto	Mazatzal	252,494
Tonto	Four Peaks	61,074
	Hellsgate	37,440
	Salome	18,531
	Salt River Canyon	32,101
	Sierra Ancha	20,850
	Superstition	159,780

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**USDI Bureau of Land Management**  
**—portions extending into Utah (UT)**

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There is a total of 47 wilderness areas on BLM lands in Arizona with approximately 1,405,750 acres. There are also two wilderness study areas.

<b>District</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Safford District	85,830
Phoenix District	966,740
Arizona Strip District	265,420
Yuma District	87,760

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**USDI National Park Service**

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(No pets or weapons allowed. Inquire locally for other limitations.)

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Wilderness</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Chiricahua National Monument	Chiricahua	11,985
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument	Organ Pipe	330,000
Petrified Forest National Park	Petrified Forest	50,260
Saguaro National Monument	Saguaro	70,905

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**USDI Fish and Wildlife Service**

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There are four wilderness areas on Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge lands in Arizona with approximately 1,352,475 acres.

<b>Wilderness</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Cabeza Prieta	803,418
Havasu	17,801
Imperial	15,056
Kofa	516,200

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## New Mexico

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### USDA Forest Service

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Forest	Wilderness	Acres
Carson	Cruces Basin	18,000
	Latir Peak	20,000
	Wheeler Peak	18,897
Cibola	Apache Kid	44,626
	Manzano Mountain	37,195
	Sandia Mountain	38,357
	Withington	19,000
Gila	Aldo Leopold	202,016
	Blue Range	29,304
	Gila	558,065
Lincoln	Capitan Mountain	35,967
	White Mountain	48,885
Santa Fe	Dome	5,200
	San Pedro Parks	41,132
Santa Fe and Carson	Chama River Canyon	50,300
	Pecos	223,333

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### USDI Bureau of Land Management

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District	Wilderness	Acres
Albuquerque	Bisti/De-na-zin	41,170
	Cebolla	61,600
	West Malpais	39,540

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### USDI National Park Service

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(No pets or weapons allowed. Inquire locally for other limitations.)

Unit	Wilderness	Acres
Carlsbad National Park	Carlsbad	46,000
Bandelier National Monument	Bandelier	33,000

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### USDI Fish and Wildlife Service

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Refuge	Wilderness	Acres
Bosque del Apache	Bosque del Apache	57,331
Bitter Lake	Salt Creek	9,621

## For More Information . . .

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**You may obtain additional information and area maps from the following offices:**

### **USDA Forest Service - Arizona and New Mexico**

Forest Service  
Public Affairs Office  
333 Broadway Blvd., SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 842-3292  
Web site: [www.usda.gov/r3](http://www.usda.gov/r3)

### **USDI Bureau of Land Management**

#### **Arizona**

Bureau of Land Management  
Arizona State Office  
One North Central Avenue,  
Suite 800  
Phoenix, AZ 85004-4427  
Phone: (602) 417-9200  
Web site: [www.blm.gov/az](http://www.blm.gov/az)

#### **New Mexico**

Bureau of Land Management  
New Mexico State Office  
301 Dinosaur Trail  
P.O. Box 27115  
Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115  
Phone: (505) 954-2000  
Web site: [www.blm.gov/nm](http://www.blm.gov/nm)

### **USDI National Park Service**

#### **Arizona**

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Interior  
2120 N. Central Avenue,  
Suite 120  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
Phone: (602) 794-3804, Ext. 0  
Web site: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

#### **New Mexico**

National Park Service  
SW System Support Office  
P.O. Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728  
Phone: (505) 988-6011  
Web site: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

### **USDI Fish and Wildlife Service - New Mexico**

Fish and Wildlife Service  
Information Office  
500 Gold Avenue, SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 248-6911  
Web site: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>

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*"Stepping into wilderness and looking past ourselves, we see the vivid space of great forests, mountains, rivers, and deserts. You might say the wilderness experience gives us a standard by which to measure our sanity . . . (It) calls out the wilderness inside ourselves, and we're always surprised by its sane and gentle nature."*

*—Albert Saijo*

